AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1-18 (cancelled)

19. (New) A board transferring apparatus for transferring boards between the board transferring apparatus and a first component-mounting board production apparatus, comprising:

an unprocessed board transfer unit including

(i) an unprocessed board transfer path along which an unprocessed board, as a board not yet processed by the first component-mounted board production apparatus, is to be transferred in a transfer direction, and

(ii) an unprocessed board carry-in device operable to move between said unprocessed board transfer path and the first component-mounted board production apparatus so as to carry the unprocessed board into the first component-mounted board production apparatus;

a process-finished board transfer unit including

(i) a process-finished board transfer path along which a process-finished board, as a board processed by the first component-mounted board production apparatus, is to be transferred in the transfer direction, and

(ii) a process-finished board send-out device that is different from said unprocessed board carry-in device and is operable to move between said process-finished board transfer path and the first component-mounted board production apparatus so as to carry the process-finished board out from the first component-mounted board production apparatus; and

a shift device operable to move between said unprocessed board transfer path and said process-finished board transfer path so as to shift a board between said unprocessed board transfer path and said process-finished board transfer path.

20. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

a controller for controlling operations of said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device.

21. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 20, wherein when a second component-mounted board production apparatus is arranged in series with the first component-mounted production apparatus along the transfer direction, with the first component-mounted board production apparatus and the second component-mounted board production apparatus being for performing different processes relative to one another,

said shift device is positioned between the first component-mounted board production apparatus and the second component-mounted board production apparatus, and

said controller is for controlling said shift device so as to shift the process-finished board, after being carried out from the first component-mounted board production apparatus to said process-finished board transfer path, to said unprocessed board transfer path.

22. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 21, wherein

said controller is for controlling operations of said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device based on an arrangement of the first component-mounted board production apparatus and the second component-mounted board production apparatus along the transfer direction and a processing program to be executed for boards to be processed.

23. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 19, wherein

said process-finished board send-out device and said shift device are separate from one another.

24. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 23, further comprising:

a controller for controlling operations of said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device.

25. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 19, wherein

said process-finished board send-out device and said shift device are constructed and arranged to shift the process-finished board to said unprocessed board transfer path after the process-finished board has been received on said process-finished board transfer path.

26. (New) The board transferring apparatus according to claim 25, further comprising:

a controller for controlling operations of said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device.

27. (New) A component mounting apparatus comprising:

a first component-mounted board production device;

a board transferring device for transferring boards between the board transferring device and said first component-mounted board production device, said board transferring device including

(i) an unprocessed board transfer unit having

(a) an unprocessed board transfer path along which an unprocessed board, as a board not yet processed by said first component-mounted board production device, is to be transferred in a transfer direction, and

(b) an unprocessed board carry-in device operable to move between said unprocessed board transfer path and said first component-mounted board production device so as to carry the unprocessed board into said first component-mounted board production device;

(ii) a process-finished board transfer unit having

(a) a process-finished board transfer path along which a process-finished board, as a board processed by said first component-mounted board production device, is to be transferred in the transfer direction, and

(b) a process-finished board send-out device that is different from said unprocessed board carry-in device and is operable to move between said process-finished board transfer path and said first component-mounted board production device so as to carry the process-finished board out from said first component-mounted board production device; and

a shift device operable to move between said unprocessed board transfer path and said process-finished board transfer path so as to shift a board between said unprocessed board transfer path and said process-finished board transfer path.

28. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 27, further comprising:

a controller for controlling operations of said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device.

29. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 28, further comprising:

a second component-mounted board production device arranged in series with said first component-mounted board production device along the transfer direction, with said first component-mounted board production device and said second component-mounted board production device being for performing different processes relative to one another, and with said shift device being positioned between said first component-mounted board production device and said second component-mounted board production device,

wherein said controller is for controlling said shift device so as to so as to shift the process-finished board, after being carried out from said first component-mounted board production device to said process-finished board transfer path, to said unprocessed board transfer path.

30. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 29, wherein

said first component-mounted board production device comprises a first supply/mounting machine operable to mount first components onto an unprocessed board, and said second component-mounted board production device comprises a second supply/mounting machine operable to mount second components onto an unprocessed board, and

said controller is for controlling said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device so as to cause said first supply/mounting machine to mount the first components onto an unprocessed board, then cause this board to be carried into said second supply/mounting machine, and then cause said second supply/mounting machine to mount the second components onto this board.

31. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 29, wherein

said process-finished board send-out device and said shift device are separate from one another.

32. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 31, wherein

said first component-mounted board production device comprises a first supply/mounting machine operable to mount first components onto an unprocessed board, and said second component-mounted board production device comprises a second supply/mounting machine operable to mount second components onto an unprocessed board, and

said controller is for controlling said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device so as to cause said first supply/mounting machine to mount the first components onto an unprocessed board, then cause this board to be carried into said second supply/mounting machine, and then cause said second supply/mounting machine to mount the second components onto this board.

33. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 29, wherein

said process-finished board send-out device and said shift device are constructed and arranged to shift the process-finished board to said unprocessed board transfer path after the process-finished board has been received on said process-finished board transfer path.

34. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 33, wherein

said first component-mounted board production device comprises a first supply/mounting machine operable to mount first components onto an unprocessed board, and said second component-mounted board production device comprises a second supply/mounting machine operable to mount second components onto an unprocessed board, and

said controller is for controlling said unprocessed board transfer unit, said process-finished board transfer unit and said shift device so as to cause said first supply/mounting machine to mount the first components onto an unprocessed board, then cause this board to be carried into said second

supply/mounting machine, and then cause said second supply/mounting machine to mount the second components onto this board.

35. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said process-finished board send-out device and said shift device are separate from one another.

36. (New) The component mounting apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said process-finished board send-out device and said shift device are constructed and arranged to shift the process-finished board to said unprocessed board transfer path after the process-finished board has been received on said process-finished board transfer path.

37. (New) A board transfer method comprising:

carrying an unprocessed board, as a board not processed by a first component-mounted board production apparatus, from an unprocessed board transfer conveyor into said first component-mounted board production apparatus;

sending out a process-finished board, as a board processed by said first component-mounted board production apparatus, from said first component-mounted board production apparatus to a process-finished board transfer conveyor which is different from said unprocessed board transfer conveyor; and

moving said process-finished board from said process-finished board transfer conveyor to said unprocessed board transfer conveyor.

38. (New) The board transfer method according to claim 37, wherein a second component-mounted board production apparatus is arranged in series with said first component-mounted board production apparatus along a transfer direction of said unprocessed board and said process-finished board, with said first component-mounted board production apparatus and said second component-mounted board production apparatus being for performing different processes relative to one another, said method further comprising:

after moving said process-finished board to said unprocessed board transfer conveyor, carrying said process-finished board into said second component-mounted board production apparatus.

39. (New) The board transfer method according to claim 38, further comprising:

controlling

(i) carrying of said unprocessed board from said unprocessed board transfer conveyor into said first component-mounted board production apparatus,

(ii) moving of said process-finished board from said process-finished board transfer conveyor to said unprocessed board transfer conveyor, and

(iii) carrying of said process-finished board into said second component-mounted board production apparatus,

based on an arrangement of said first component-mounted board production apparatus and said second component-mounted board production apparatus along said transfer direction and a processing program to be executed for boards to be processed.